

J. LEE

Boomer Extraordinary

By Charles Wesley Sanders
(Continued From Yesterday)

Two of them he recognized as Griggs and Kirby. The other two men were the tramps who had robbed him of his gun and his flash-light in the freight car. As a matter of fact, his flash-light now in the hands of one of them.

CHAPTER IX.

"Some Fine."
The four men moved off through the woods. Jasper started after them slowly.
Quinlan caught up with him. The others trailed behind.
"You've got a bum steer, haven't you?" Quinlan asked.
"How do you mean?"
"Why, two of those are only hoboes."

"They're the men we're after," Jasper said. "I'll tell you about it after a bit."

The four men kept on till they came to the other side of the woods. They sat down inside a fence which skirted the woods here. Jasper halted his party far enough back of them to be out of ear-shot.
"Those two bums robbed me of a flash-light and a gun while I was beating my way into this town," Jasper explained to Quinlan. "I ran into them later at the Eagle Hotel."

There was something familiar about them but Jasper couldn't place them. I thought I must have met up with them somewhere in my travels.

"When I met young Norton I half tumbled. Norton looked about the same as when he was in the box-car with the other two. They had rigged themselves out in new clothes so that they were not recognizable."

"They had picked up Norton in the West and had grabbed him to use him for a stall. O'Day told you what their past had been. Things were getting too hot for them the other side of the Mississippi."

"A year ago Kirby, who had been working with them came on here to make a new claim where they were not known. Since as rails are now he had no trouble in getting a job."

"Eventually he landed the agency at Marvin Center. Day by day he learned what he could about how business in the town was conducted. He was in communication with Bonner and Dayton and Kirby. Kirby ousted you with her by threatening to expose the kid. You lost your temper and were an easy mark, if I may say so."

"Some Fine."
"How long will it be before I get my hands on Kirby?" Quinlan growled.

"He's to be left to me, you understand."

"It won't be long," Jasper answered. "I understand Bonner and Dayton brought Norton back here to help them in the jobs they planned."

"He knew the town well, and Bonner and Dayton knew he would come in handy. He was scared of his life of them."

"He hid in his sister's home till the hick captain came there fooling for me. Then he tried to run away. I nailed him."

"Bonner and Dayton slid into this vicinity as a couple of tramps. They hopped off a freight about here, went up in the woods, and Kirby and all Norton got their suit-cases from the Western Terminal."

"Then they changed clothing and became a couple of traveling salesmen. They were set for an easy getaway if any one began to suspect the apparently respectable Bonner and Dayton."

"As soon as they finish this job, they will change back to their other clothes. If any one sees them here, the hunt will be for a couple of bums, not for Bonner and Dayton."

"How do Kirby and Griggs cover up?" Quinlan asked.

"That puzzles me," Jasper answered. "We'll have to wait and see."

"They waited for twenty minutes. An eastbound freight rumbled by. In twenty minutes more there was a west-bound freight."

"Two of the men near the fence rose."

"That's Kirby and Griggs," Jasper said. "You better keep your eye on them. Look out. They're coming this way."

They flattened themselves behind trees. Kirby and Griggs passed within a few feet of them. When they were safely by Quinlan took after them.

Jasper turned toward Bonner and Dayton. They were dragging underbrush away from the fence. Then one of them pulled out a heavy sledge and tossed it over the fence. They climbed through the wires.

O'Day crept to Jasper.

"Shall I butt in?" he asked.

"Let them go," Jasper said. "You couldn't steer them any better than they are steering themselves."

When the two men reached the back of the freight car, they were at a fence. Bonner picked up a sledge between the joints of two rails. Bonner lifted the sledge above his head. Before it could descend Jasper was between the wires. He ran down the bank and across the right-of-way.

Bonner dropped the sledge and turned. Dayton got to his feet. A gun appeared in Bonner's hand.

He fired at Jasper as Jasper came on. Jasper felt the bullet nip his shoulder. Then he closed with Bonner.

Over Bonner's shoulder he saw Dayton whip out a revolver. Dayton's hand was half-way up when there was a shot behind Jasper. Jasper saw the gun drop from Dayton's hand.

SCHOOL DAYS

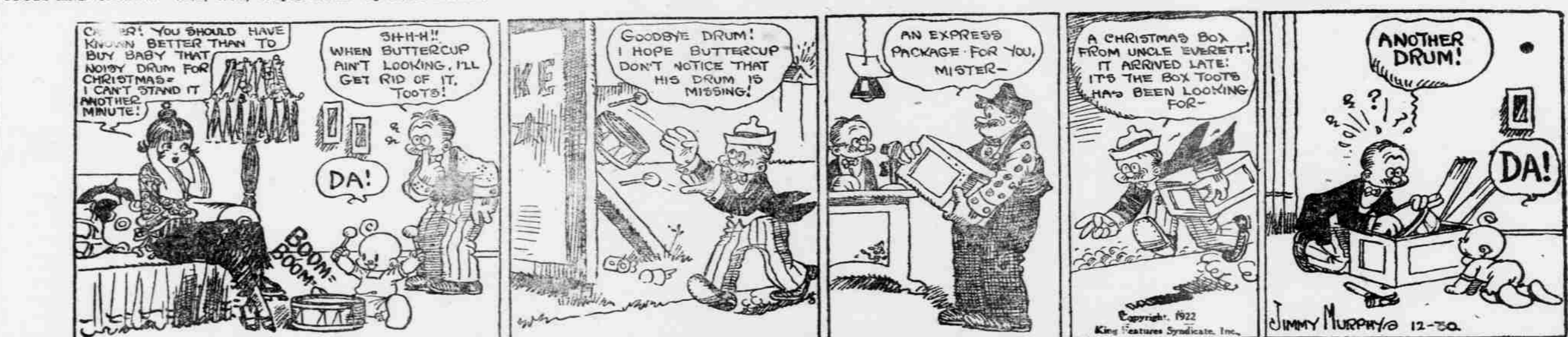
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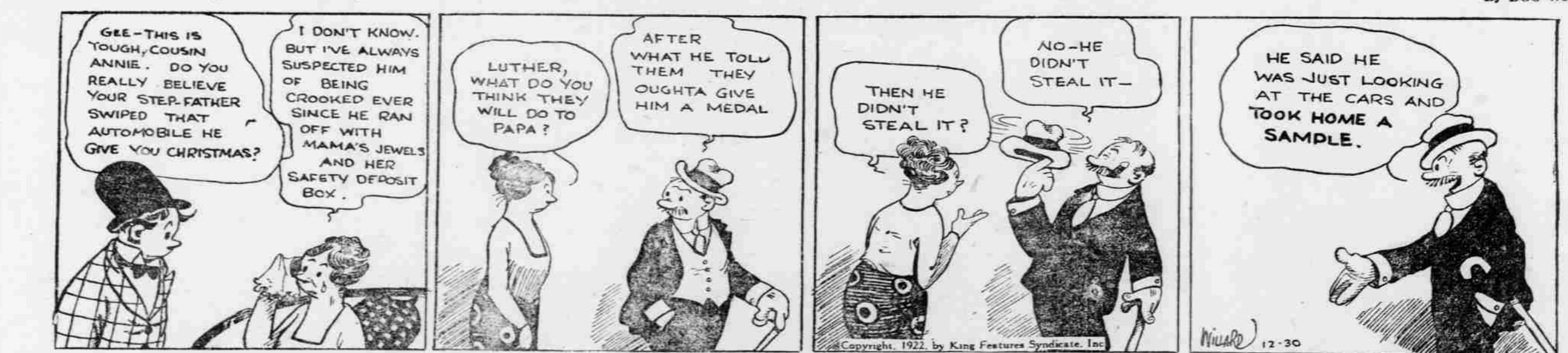
SOMEBODY'S STENOG—For Hey I agree



FOOTS AND CASPER—Well, Well, Casper Drums Up More Trouble.



THE OUTTA LUCK CLUB—Papa Has an Alibi—Maybe.



Jasper said, "That hero stuff doesn't appeal to me."

"I know it doesn't," O'Toole declared. "But I don't blame you for leaning to it now. Here's nothing like a woman so quick and so hard as a little of that same hero stuff you gave it to me!"

"Well, I wish you'd take a look at my shoulder," Jasper said. "Bonner nicked me."

"It's nothing," O'Toole said after he had examined it. "But you don't need to let on to Kate that it ain't!"

"Oh, shut up," Jasper said. "There was a long whistle blast to the west."

"There's No. 22 coming now," Jasper said. "We had better get these fellows off the track."

They carried Bonner and Dayton over on the right-of-way. A headlight showed to the west. They were a railroad dick. They wanted to get a line on you. That's why I sprung that story. How did you pull us?"

"I was hiding upstairs in your hotel when you and O'Toole came up," Jasper answered. "After you left, O'Toole and I found we belonged to the same lodge. We listened to Bonner and Dayton while they plotted to wreck the train."

"They were so full of their plan that they couldn't sleep. They got up in the night to talk about it. I was surprised to hear them mention your name after you'd been so kind to lend me five."

"That was to get close to us," Jasper said.

Griggs said, "Am I close enough now?" Jasper asked.

"Too darned close for comfort," Griggs said. "Kirby bailed things up. He tried to have you pinched to get you out of the way, but you worked too rapid."

Bonner had got to his feet. He was rubbing the back of his head.

"I'll make you fellows sweat for this," he yelled. "I'll have you up for assault with intent to kill."

"That's another old gag," O'Toole grinned. "A lawbreaker is always going to have the law on a man that interferes with his pet schemes. Well, let's be moving."

"Oh, men, won't this make that poor fish of a captain sore?" Griggs said. "Just a minute before we go," Quinlan said. "I've got a little account to square with Mr. Kirby."

He walked up to Kirby and stood in front of him.

"Will you fight, Kirby?" he asked. Kirby looked at him a moment in silence. Then a sudden gust of anger seemed to sweep through him.

His right fist shot out and caught Quinlan on the mouth. Quinlan fell back a step.

"I didn't think you had it in you," he said. "But I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Kirby swung forward. Quinlan set himself and his own right fist caught Kirby on the point of the jaw. Kirby went down and lay still.

"That makes just a little bit more delay," O'Toole said, "but I guess it had to be done."

Bonner took a step toward Jasper.

"Look here," he said. "This boy Norton is concerned here in Marvin Center. Berries committed here in Marvin Center. He—"

"I know all about it," Jasper broke in. "You used him as a lookout and I've been keeping him from now on."

"We'll see that nothing happens to him. He's opened a brand-new book and I'm going to help him keep his record straight from now on."

"Kirby is waking up, Quinlan. Bring him along."

The two men faced each other.

"I've got a call to make," Quinlan said. "On the level I don't know what I'm going to say. I'm shaky."

"I should have hated Kirby long ago and made Hazel marry me. She may turn me down for being such a nut."

"The best thing you can do is to go straight to her," Jasper said. "I've got to see a doctor about my shoulder."

"Your shoulder is bad all of a sudden, isn't it?" Quinlan jeered. "I'll tell you what you're going to do: you're going right up to the house with me and stand by me."

"You're shy of Kate this minute. Just when things are looking good for you."

"Well," Jasper said, "this is all new to me. How do you put that question to a girl, Dan?"

"It gets itself done," Quinlan answered. "You come along."

At the Norton's gate Jasper stopped.

"You and the boy go in," he said. "We're overlooking something. Kate will be at the station working."

"Well, so she will," Quinlan said. "You go down there. You hear me, Jasper?"

"Uhuh," Jasper assented.

Quinlan and Norton went up the front steps. Norton opened the door. "Hazel," he called, "here's Mr. Quinlan."

There was the sound of footsteps along the hall. Hazel came into view under the hall light.

"Dan, oh, Dan!" she cried.

Quinlan stood staring at her for a moment and then caught her up to him. Jasper turned away.

"I'm headed straight for the station where Kate is," he told himself. "If it's as easy as all that, it's soon done."

As he went along the platform, he saw Kate sitting before the telegraph table. At the sound of his footsteps she looked up.

Jasper expected her to run to the door as such as she caught sight of him, but she only kept her place and averted her eyes.

"Maybe it isn't so easy after all," Jasper told himself, "but I'll have it out with her. I won't make Dan Quinlan's mistake."

He entered the office.

"Good evening, Kate," he said. "Good evening," said Kate. "Aren't you glad to see me?" Jasper asked.

Kate turned about. Jasper saw that there was smoldering resentment in her eyes.

"Where have you been and what have you been doing?" she asked.

Jasper stood looking at her.

"You have been relieved," Kate went on. "A new man is coming to take your place tonight."

"So?" said Jasper. "Well, I think I'll protest to Dolan about that. May I send a message?"

"I suppose so," Kate said.

Jasper sat down at the way wire. He felt Kate's eyes on him. Suddenly he heard her gasp.

"What has happened to you?" she asked. "Here's the despatcher's office. Will you copy this message while I send it?"

Kate drew a pad of clip toward her. She leaned over it, pencil poised.

(Continued on Page 11.)

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

Snapshots.



PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN RENEWING HIS YOUTH

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